

University of Luxembourg

ISTP Conference 2019, Copenhagen, DK

**Towards and understanding of biculturalism:
The dynamic tension of being bicultural**

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Fonds National de la
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Towards an understanding of biculturalism: The dynamic tension of being bicultural

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- Preamble
- Context – diversity and Luxembourg
- Review – current theories on biculturalism
- Introduce - theoretical building blocks
- Present – my model building on dynamic tension
- Engage - Discussion



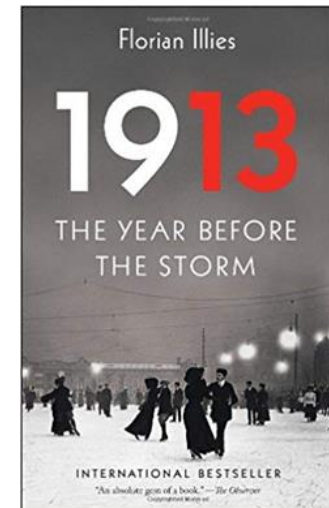
Preamble – Conference Theme: Measured Lives: Theoretical Psychology in an Era of *Acceleration*

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- Florian Illies – 1913
 - End of an era – new era?
 - Stefan Zweig – End of the *era of stability*
 - Questioning of values
 - Disorientation and Stress
 - Outbreak of “*Neurasthenie*”
 - Robert Musil – Begin of the *era of haste*
 - Being ruled by the watch
 - Technology/ electricity dictate pace of life
 - Old wine in new bottles?



- Era of Super- diversity (Vertovec, 2007)
 - Globalisation, interconnectedness and transnationalism
 - Diverse composition of the migrant community
 - Complexification, acceleration of changes and increased fluidity of societies
 - Need to rethink integration (Grzymala-Kazłowska, A. & Phillimore J., 2018)
 - «Having exposure to multiple cultures is becoming the norm rather than the exception» (p. 963, West et al. 2017)
- Fields of Tension in a boundary crossing world (Hermans, Konopka, Oosterwegel, & Zomber, 2017)
 - Globalization: increasingly fluid and boundary crossing world
 - People are «on the move» in boundary-crossing societies
 - «on the move» within themselves.

- Learning from Luxembourg (Murdock, 2017)
 - Foreign population percentage 47.5% (Statec, 2019)
 - Diverse population (length of stay, generation status, socio-occupational roles...)
 - Mixed national families – children growing up with more than one cultural point of reference

- First attempts (Rebane, 2018)
 - Park & Stonequist
 - Goldberg
- Early Models (Murdock, 2016)
 - LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton (1993)
 - Phinney & Devich-Navarro (1997)
- Newer Models (Murdock, 2016)
 - Cultural Frame-switching (CFS) – Hong et al. (2000)
 - Bicultural Integration Model (BII) – Benet-Martínez et al. (2012)
 - Acculturation Complexity Model – Tadmor & Tetlock (2006)
- Recent Model
 - Transformative Theory of Biculturalism - West et al. (2017)

- Biculturalism as *precarious balancing act* between two systems.
- Focus on *adaptation* processes
- Assume a *linear* model of culture acquisition
 - Dominated until the 60s
 - Still reflected in some acculturation theories (see Rebane, 2018)

Early models:

Framework developed by LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton (1993)

- Conducted a literature review on the psychological impact of biculturalism with the intention to show *alternatives to the assumption of a linear model of culture acquisition*.
- Five different models of second culture acquisition:

Assimilation	Hierarchical, unidirectional relationship ongoing process of absorption into the culture that is perceived as dominant or more desirable
Acculturation	
Alternation	non-hierarchical, bidirectional additive model of cultural acquisition
(Multiculturalism)	Hypothetical model
Fusion	Cultures merge and fuse together until they are indistinguishable and form a new culture.

- Focus on effective *functioning* of individuals in dual cultures.
- Development of the construct of *bicultural competence* which grows mainly out of the alternation model.

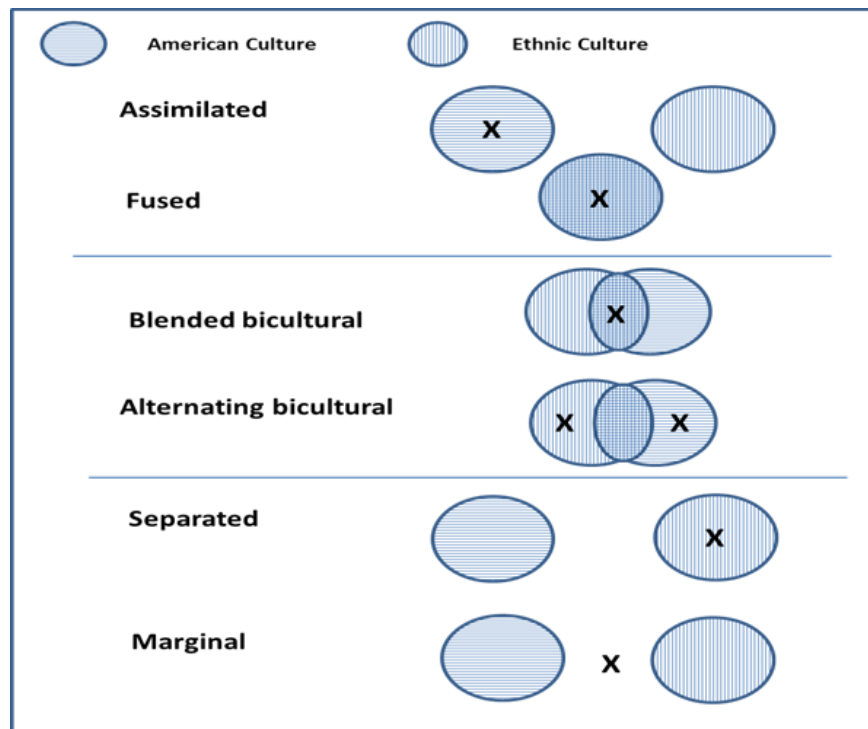


- Dimensions of bicultural competence:
 - Knowledge of cultural beliefs and values
 - Positive attitudes to both minority and majority groups
 - Bicultural efficacy
 - Communication ability
 - Role repertoire (range of culturally or situationally appropriate behaviors or roles)
 - Sense of being grounded (stable social networks)

- It is important to distinguish between cultural *identification* and cultural *knowledge*. A person can have knowledge of another culture without identifying with it.



- There is more than one way to being bicultural:



Different ways
of being
bicultural



The circles in the diagram represent ethnic and American cultures respectively, and the "X" represents the individual's position with respect to the two cultures.

Newer Models - Cultural Frame Switching (CFS)

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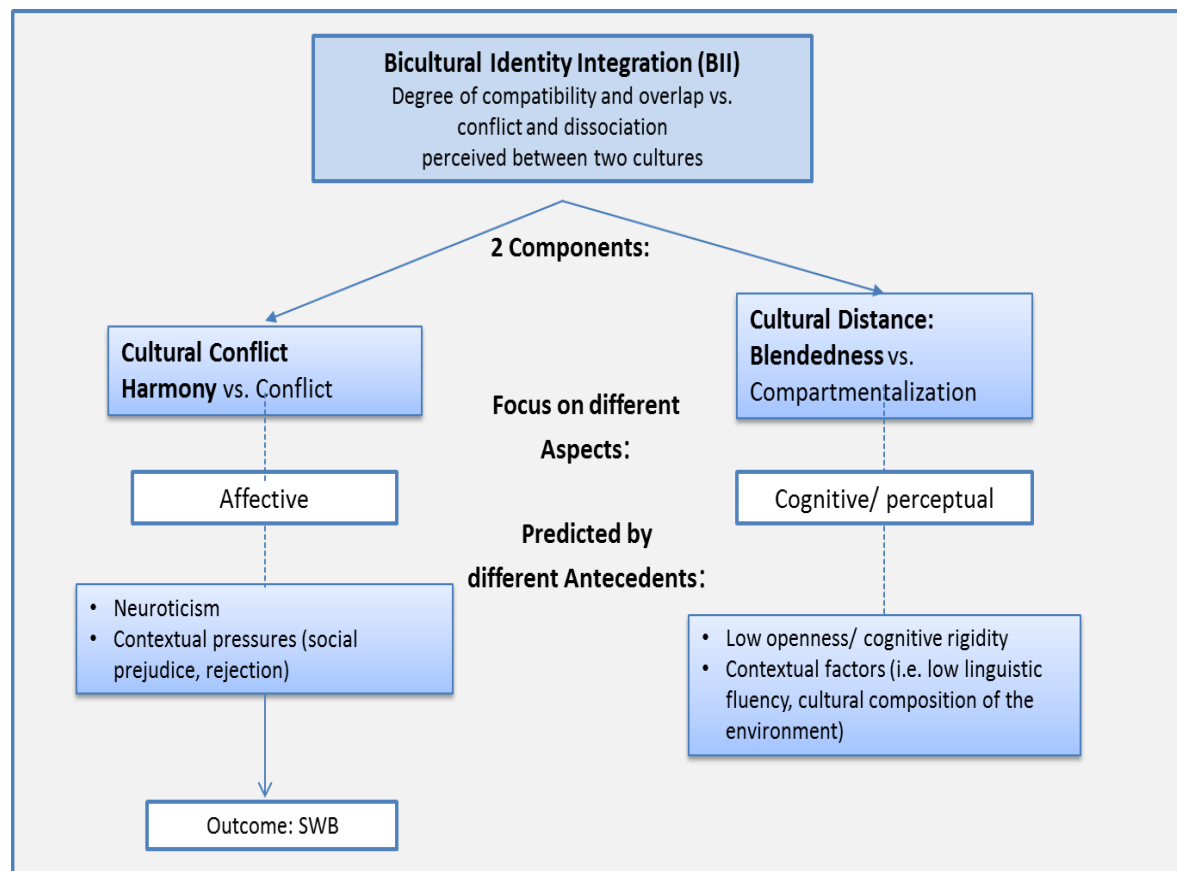
- Criticism of earlier Models:
 - Confounding of identity and behavioral markers
 - Labels such as “fused” or “blended” refer *to identity related aspects*
 - “alternating” refers to the *behavioral* domain that is the ability to engage in cultural frame switching (CFS).

Building Blocks:

- Hong et al. (2000) have adopted a dynamic, constructivist approach to understanding culture: Culture is internalized in the form of **loose networks of domain-specific knowledge structures**, such as categories and/ or implicit theories.
- Biculturals navigate through their cultural worlds by switching between different cultural interpretive frames or **meaning systems** (e.g. culture-reinforced cognitive, affective and emotional schemas) in response to **cultural cues**.



■ Components of BII



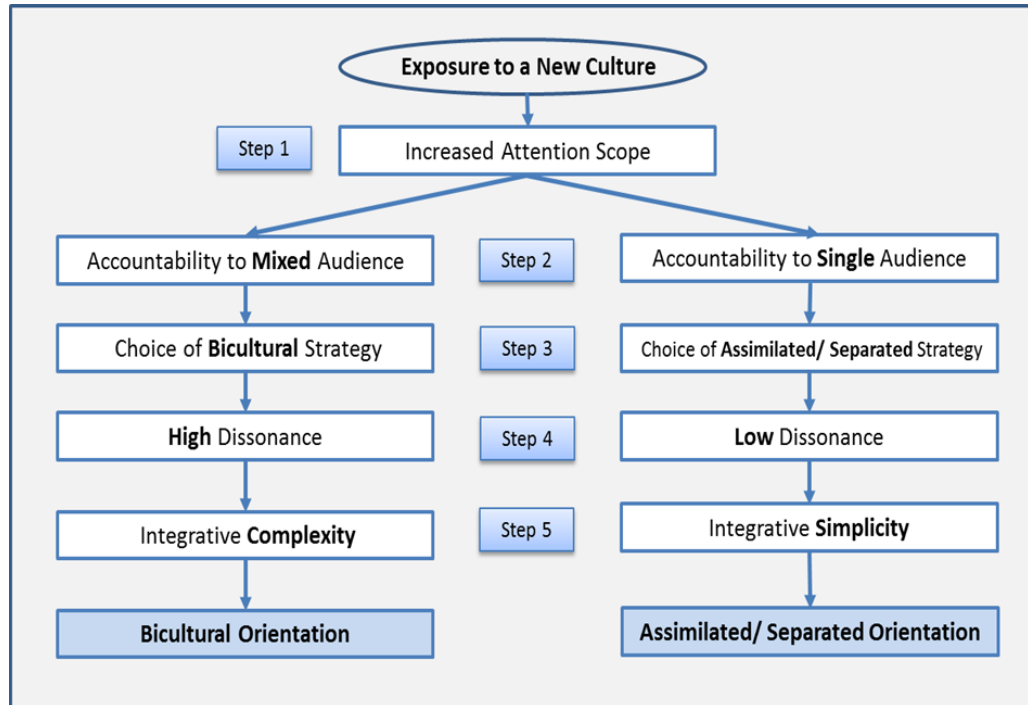
- Focus on *integrative complexity*, “...the capacity and willingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of competing perspectives on the same issue and to forge conceptual links among these perspectives” (p. 174).
- Introduce *accountability pressure* - the need to justify one’s thoughts and actions to significant others.
 - A single audience refers to a matrix of interpersonal accountability relationships composed of perspectives with a unified cultural orientation.
 - A mixed audience refers to a matrix composed of at least two distinct cultural perspectives.

Acculturation Complexity Model (ACM) overview

Tadmor & Tetlock (2006, p. 176)

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- Explicit integration of the **other**
- Acknowledging of **competing** perspectives
- Recognition of dissonance/ **tension**

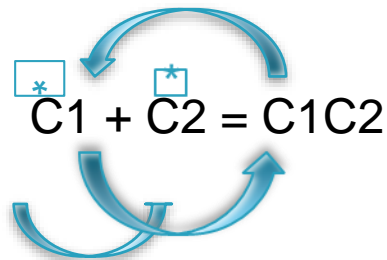


Recent Theory - Transformative Theory of Biculturalism (West, Zhang, Yampolsky, & Sasaki, 2017)

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- Negotiation processes:
- Go beyond the additive model – acknowledge that the *process of negotiation transforms* the experience of culture.

Transforming

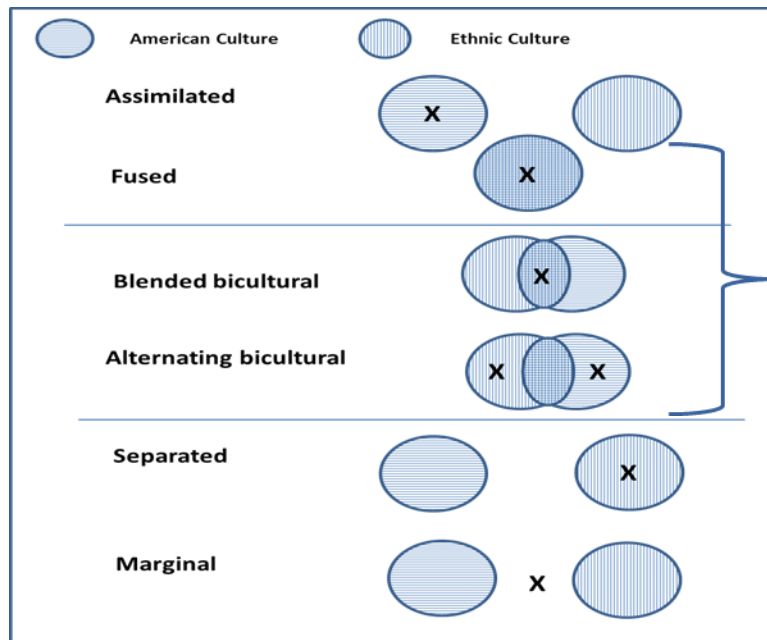


Process!

Recent Theory -Transformative Theory of Biculturalism (West, Zhang, Yampolsky, & Sasaki, 2017)

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■ Bicultural negotiation processes: New labels



Hybridization

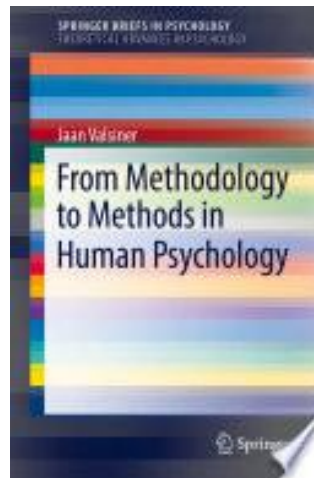
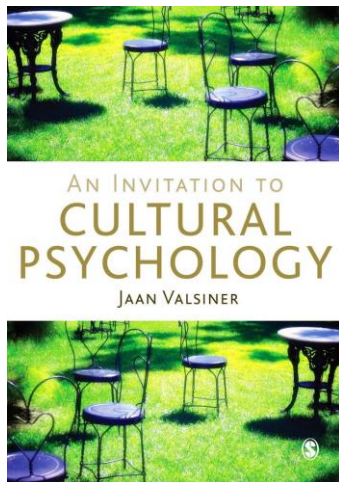
Integration

Frame Switching

- Cake analogy: Certain ingredients
- Combined in the right order
- transformative process of combining the ingredients



- Theoretical perspective: Cultural Psychology of semiotic dynamics (Valsiner, 2014, 2017)



Theoretical building blocks: Axiomatics for Human Psychology – Valsiner (2017)

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Axiom 1: All psychological life exists through **irreversibility of time**.

- All psychological functions operate on the border between past & future
- The present is a transient moment.
- Meaning making is always future-orientated.

Axiom 2: All human life is **mediated by signs**.

- Focus on meaningful life experiences

Axiom 3: Signs are **constructed, maintained, and demolished** as they form dynamic hierarchies.

Axiom 4: Signs are constructed by **active** sign makers
who operate towards goals (**intentionality**)
that are constantly being modified (**teleogenesis**).

Axiom 5: Sign functions constrain the range of possible experiences of the immediate **future**.

Axiom 6: Signs are **catalysts** (enabling or blocking conditions for phenomena).

Axiom 7: Constructed signs include their **contexts (co-genetic logic)**.

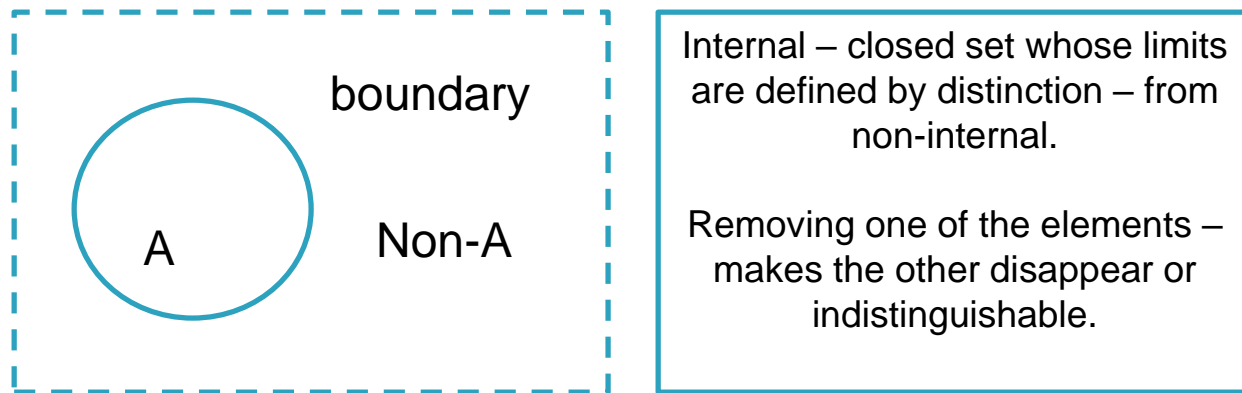
Building Block: Toward a cogenetic cultural psychology (Tateo, 2016)

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■ The Power of the Triad – cogenetic logic (Tateo, 2016)

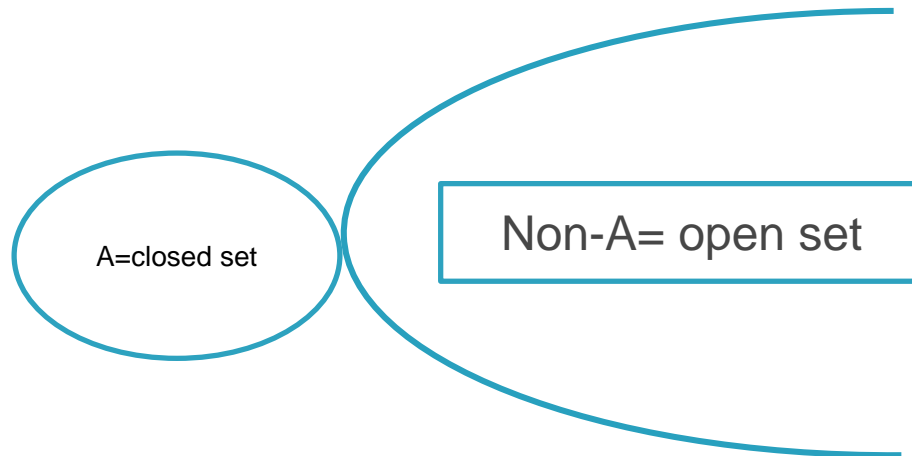


Developmental processes must follow a triadic, rather than binary logic.

Biculturalism – overcome binary logic $C1 \leftrightarrow C2$ – they are not opposites



- The closed set – the boundary and the open set are *codefined*. They cannot exist without any of the components in the triadic system.
- Dynamic codefinition – *inclusive separation* (Valsiner, 2014).



- A is closed – but **non-A is open** – in infinite set of possibilities
- National identity vs. quasi-national, not yet national, anti-national, foreigner, enemy etc. p. 439

Inclusive Separation and the buffer zone

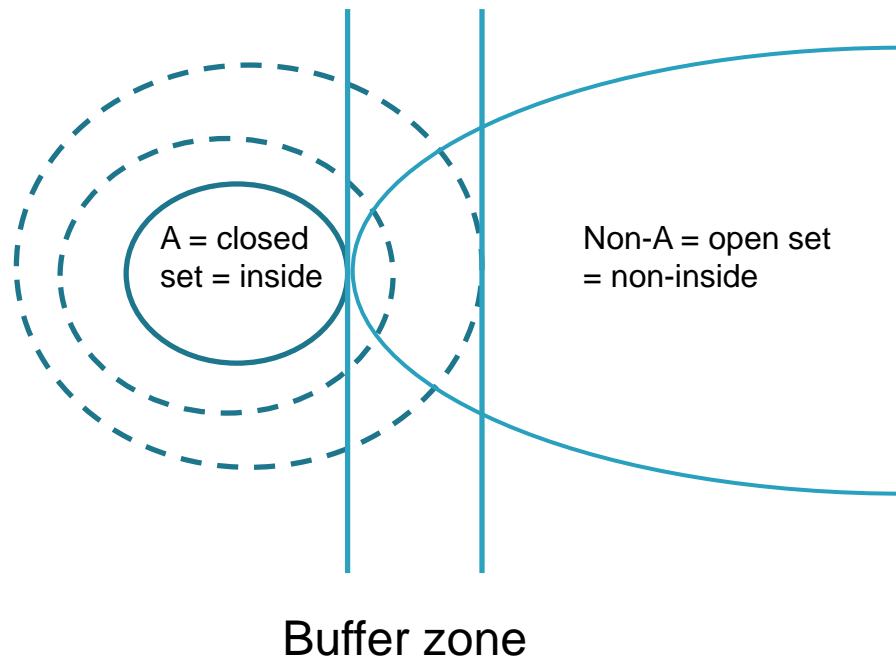
Tateo, 2016, p. 441

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- A and non-A dynamically co-define each other and include a more or less large temporal and symbolic buffer zone that establishes at the same time the **rules for separation** and the **rules for permeable borders** between A and non-A.



A can dynamically expand or constrict over time.

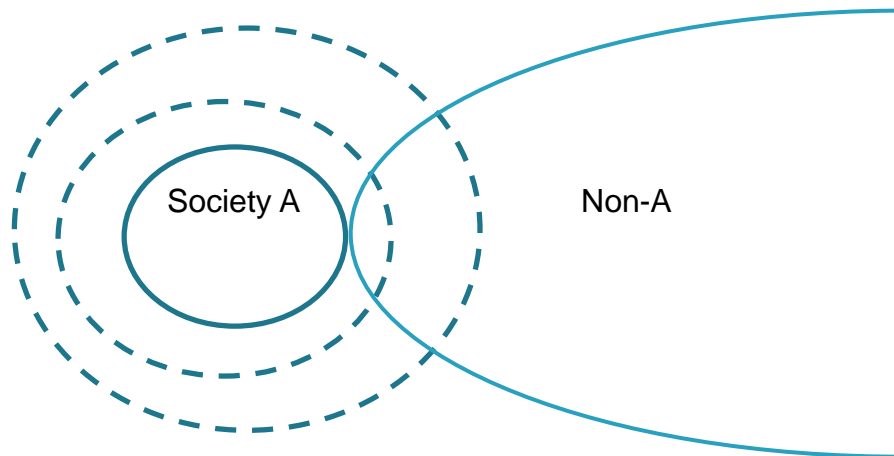


- Boundaries exist as structures that connect separated parts by providing the arena for their relationship.
- „A boundary is not the point at which something stops ... A boundary is the point from where something begins to be present.“

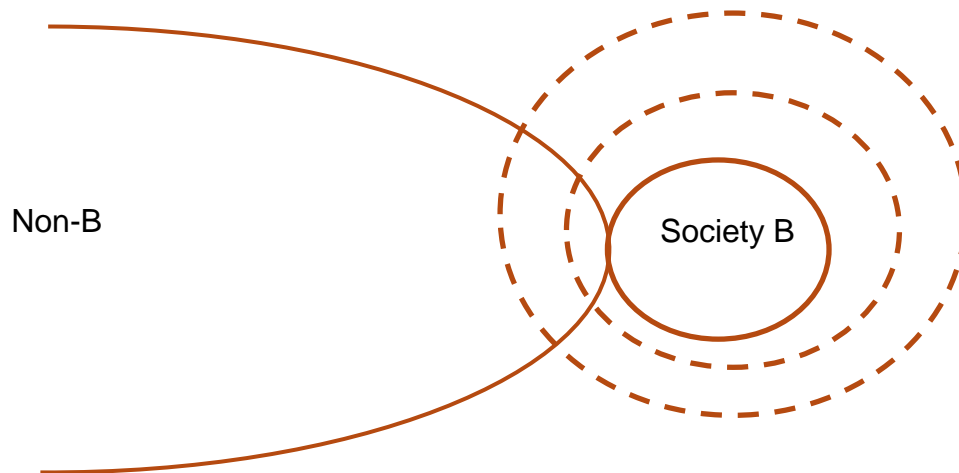
Igbo Proverb - Quoted in Valsiner (2007), p. 221.

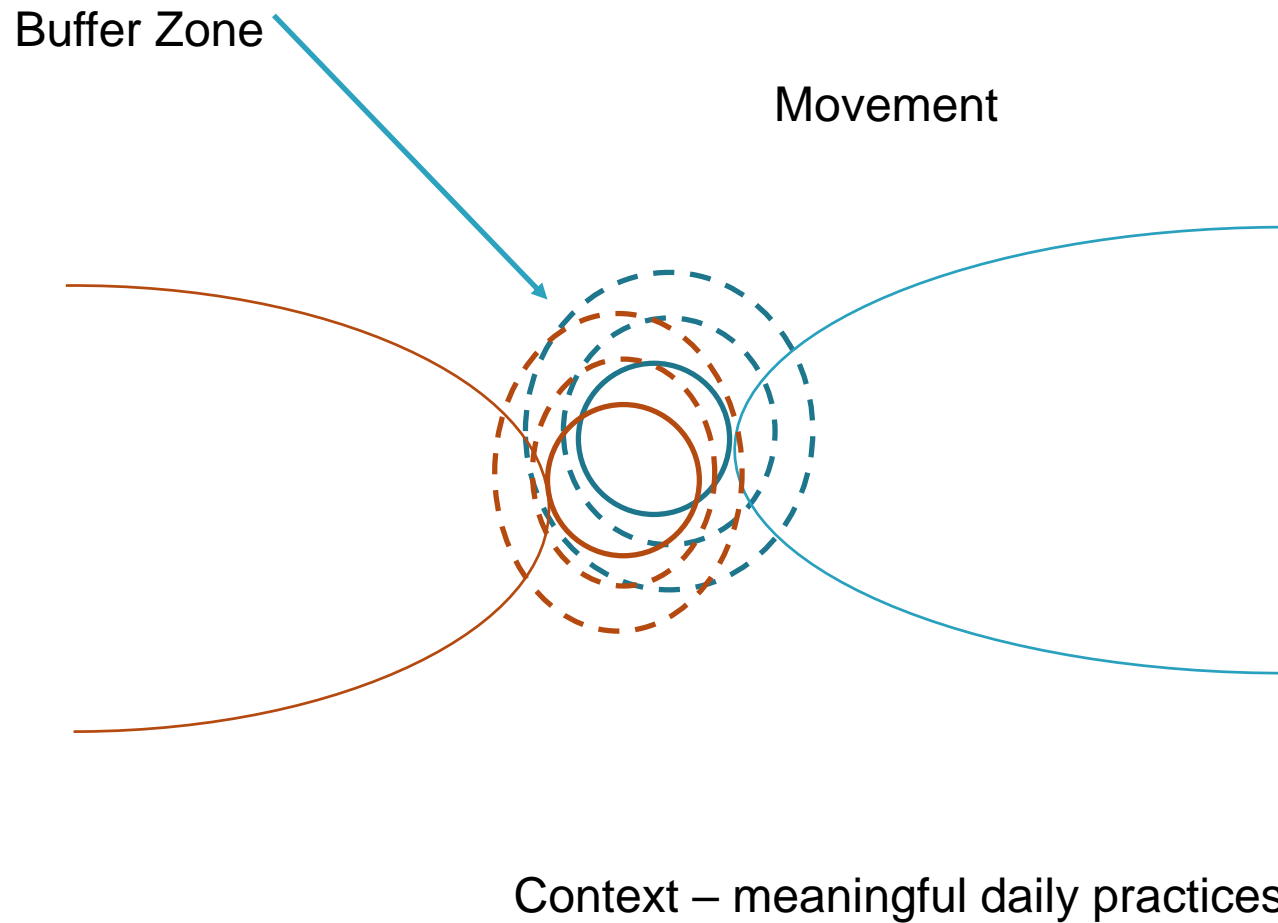
- „Psychological membranes“: Look at process mechanisms which enable and suppress the relations between adjacent parts of the dynamic system.

- A has a distinctive cultural value system, promoted by societal institutions and historical traditions.
- Within A: Positioning and counter-positioning.



- B has a distinctive cultural value system, promoted by societal institutions and historical traditions.
- Within B: Positioning and counter-positioning.

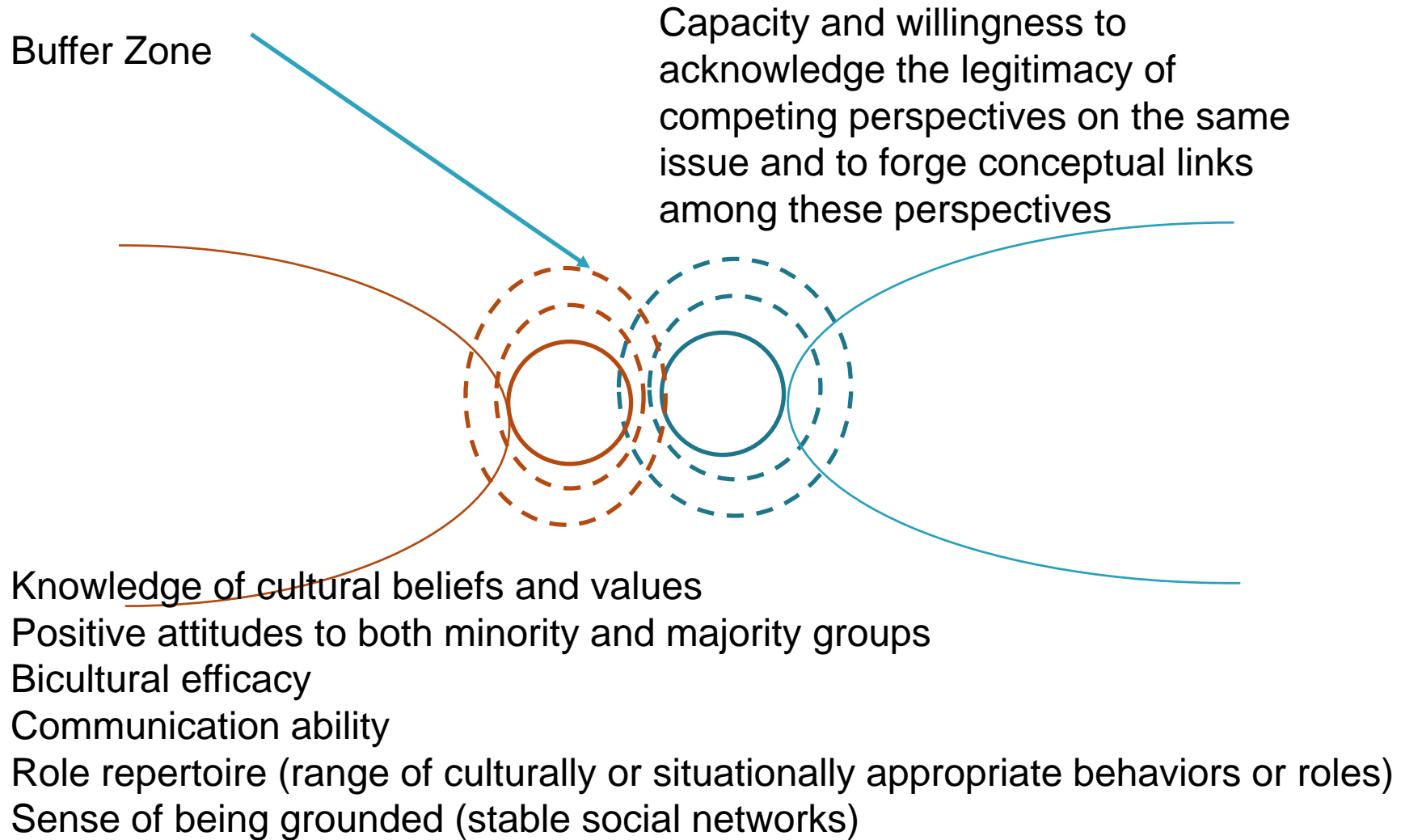




Movement: Navigation and bicultural competence

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Borders, Tensegrity and Development in Dialogue (Marsico & Tateo, 2017)

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- Organizing principle: Dynamic Tension.
 - NOT equilibrium or homeostasis.
 - Tension as a positive force
- This dynamic tension ensures both flexibility and stability over time.
- Tensional integrity – **Tensegrity.**



Borders, Tensegrity and Development in Dialogue (Marsico & Tateo, 2017)

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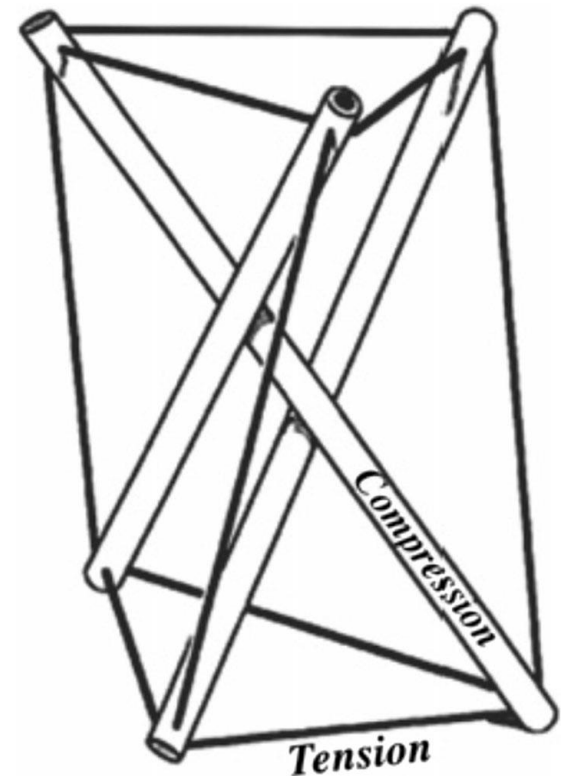


- ... Such fields of tension emerge as a result of positioning and counter-positioning processes in the arena of the power-laden society where a distinctive cultural value system, promoted by societal institutions and historical traditions, provide the Self with opportunities and constraints for development. (Marsico & Tateo, 2017, p. 537).
- Self – *dynamic semiotic system in constant evolutive tension*

- Biculturalism:
- **Self-stabilizing tensegrity network.**
 - Tension as a positive force
- **Movement:**
 - Constant positioning and counter-
 - positioning within different meaning systems

Conditions that facilitate this movement

- Within the society
- Within individuals



Marsico & Tateo, 2017, p. 548 – Simple, self-stabilizing tensegrity network.



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